

חדריו
Hadarav
His Inner Chambers





Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook


H.ADARAV
HIS INNER CHAMBERS

THE STEFANSKY EDITION

EDITED BY

Ran Sarid

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY

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Orot

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לעילוי נשמת האישה החשובה

מרת שרה סטפנסקי ע"ה

אשת הרב אליעזר שליט"א

בת הרב חיים אורי זצ"ל

למשפחת ליפשיץ

נו"נ לבעל האריה דבי עילאי

ולמעלה בקודש

שמן תורק שמה

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הוי גולה לתורה במסירות קיימה.

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ביום כ"ב כסלו תשע"ח לפ"ק

תנצב"ה

*Dedicated by her children Estee & David
and grandchildren*

Ariella, Chaim Uri, Elianna Meirav & Leora Lola Stefansky



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Translator's Preface

Rav Kook passed to his eternal reward on the third of Ellul, 5695 (1935). In the vacuum left by his passing, the following month of Tishri, his son-in-law, Rabbi Shalom Nathan Ra'an-an-Kook, spoke on Shemini 'Atseret at the traditional Third Meal. (In Erets Yisrael, Shemini 'Atseret is Simḥat Torah, the conclusion of the annual cycle of Torah reading.) Earlier in the day, the final portion of the Torah, *Ve-Zot ha-Berakhah*, was read. The last eight verses discuss the death of Moses.

The *halakhah* states: "The [last] eight verses of the Torah, a *yaḥid* (individual) reads them" (Bava Batra 15a). The great Ashkenazic authority Rabbi Mordechai ben Hillel Hakohen interprets "*yaḥid*" to mean a *talmid ḥakham*, a Torah sage.¹

The question arises, why must these eight verses be read only by a *talmid ḥakham*?

"Reb Nosson" (as Rav Kook's son-in-law was known) explained that there is cognitive dissonance when it comes to Simḥat Torah. On the one hand, we are celebrating the joyous occasion of completing the Torah. On the other hand, we are confronted with the starkest tragedy: the death of Moses. Most of us would be overwhelmed by this situation, overcome

1. His opinion is cited by Rabbi Moses Isserles in his gloss to *Shulḥan 'Arukh, Orah Hayyim*, chapter 669.

by emotion at the loss of our great teacher. Only that rare individual, the *talmid ḥakham*, possesses the enormous intellect capable of absorbing the brutal assault to the senses.²

As I write these lines, our nation is in the midst of a war that commenced on the “Eighth Day,” Simḥat Torah, 5784 (2023) with the surprise attack by the terror organization Hamas upon Israel’s southern communities. The sheer quantity of our dead and the barbarism by which they were murdered has conjured up images of the Holocaust. Not to speak of the thousands of wounded and hundreds of hostages taken captive to Gaza.

To come to terms with this tragedy of unprecedented proportions, we must all of us, individually and collectively, rise to the challenge and become that “*yaḥid*,” that rare human fortified with unusual intellectual prowess. And equally, if not more important, we must be a “*yaḥid*” in the sense of a nation united.

And having assumed the role of *Ḥatan Torah* (Master of Torah), may we yet merit the coming role of *Ḥatan Bereshit* (Master of *Bereshit*), mastering a new beginning.



I should like to express my gratitude to Ran Sarid for allowing his marvelous collection, *Ḥadarav*, to be translated into English; to my dear friend, David Stefansky, for making this and many other projects possible, as he brings *orot*, lights to the world; and to my esteemed colleague, Rabbi Elisha Paul, for acting as a facilitator.

I also convey my sincere thanks to the publisher of Koren, Matthew Miller; to the editorial staff, Rabbi Reuven Ziegler, Rabbi David Silverstein, and Ita Olesker; to the copyeditor, Tzvi Goldstein; to the Hebrew proofreader, Avichai Gamdani; to the English proofreader, Debbie Ismailoff; and to the typesetter, Taly Hahn.

You all have the blessing of the *Kohen*, Rav Kook, of blessed memory.

Bezalel Naor
Second Day of Rosh Ḥodesh Ḥeshvan, 5784

2. Reb Nosson referenced *Kuzari* III, 5. See Rabbi Shalom Nathan Ra’anan, *Be-Shemen Ra’anan*, vol. 1 (1990), pp. 221–223.

על העריכה

The Editorial Process

“**F**ather, of blessed memory, would write down notes from time to time. He never wrote things systematically in the form of a book.” So attests the Rav’s son, Rav Tsevi Yehudah Hakohen, of blessed memory, in the introduction to his talk regarding the personal writings of the Rav. The entire Torah of the Rav was written as a personal diary. Day in and day out, when the Rav was seized by his lofty intellectual visions, he would sit down and express them briefly in his notebook. So was his wont, whenever his feelings prompted him to emerge from the hidden to the revealed – whether it be in his home at night, or during his travels. The Rav left behind him tens of journals chock full of his holy notes. From them, his spiritual heirs selected paragraphs and unified them into books, each book on a specific topic.

However, despite the fact that in all the writings of the Rav his personal character is discernible, and essentially, his entire Torah is a personal diary, [revealing] a figure that embraces the world with a universalism and a love for all, nevertheless, there is something special about those paragraphs in which the Rav expresses his experiences in an openly personal manner.

So writes his son, Rav Tsevi Yehudah:

Ḥadarav

These are things of a special type, a light-ray from above. Sometimes, even bewildering and strange... A special type of analysis that is not to be found elsewhere, except in [the writings of] Rabbi Naḥman of Breslov. Self-revelatory things, even very great things.

In the continuation of his talk, [Rav Tsevi Yehudah] relates the effect these paragraphs had upon him:

There were times when Father, of blessed memory, was in Jaffa and could not spend time with me. Occasionally, I would sit with the hidden writings and delight in them.

In explaining the editorial process of this book – a collection of chapters in which the soul of the Rav sings – we wish to preface a general remark. Hand in hand with the need of arranging the entries topically was the desire to preserve, as much as possible, their personal flavor. Therefore, the entries were generally not broken down into paragraphs. By the same token, the titles of the chapters were taken from the Rav's own lexicon. Furthermore, it was important for us to stress that the Rav did not write the entries consecutively. (One might have received this impression from the order of our presentation.) For this reason, there were added ornaments (i.e., printer's devices) dividing between one entry and another. So too, there was appended a list of sources to enable the reader to consult the original context of the entry.

The contents of the book are constructed as a continuum. The guiding principle is the journey from the interior to the exterior; from the inner world of the soul to the ways in which it expresses itself in the life of the individual and the collective. In order to better explain the logic behind the arrangement, we shall divide the chapters of the book into four parts.

The first part contains three chapters that deal with the inner soul-world of the Rav. The chapter "From My Inner Chambers" is an inner demand to return to his soulful essence and to act only upon its revelations. The second chapter, "Thirst for the Living God," deals with the hidden content of the soul – its longing for its godly source. The third chapter, "The Pains of the Soul When It Is Revealed," expresses the

pains of the soul when confronted with the chains of the world – mental and physical – that prevent [the soul] from living in the expanse of its divine longing. [The chapter] ends with a great call to allow the soul to expand to all life's affairs.

The second part includes the fourth and fifth chapters, which already deal with the way in which the soul's song is actualized. The chapter "I Want to Tell a Word" describes the devolution of the soul's thought until it is expressed in the letters of speech. The chapter "A Singer of the Infinite Song" analyzes the birth pangs of creation that the Rav endures in [the process of] the (soul's) thoughts' descent until their embodiment in writing.

The third part of the book is the "middle branch of the *menorah*," and contains many chapters. It deals with the soul's own relation to all the expanses of the holy, the Torah, and the commandment. The chapter "The Wellspring of the Holy" describes the delights of the soul as it flows from the wellspring of holiness that is in the Torah and the commandments and out of that to all life's manifestations. Out of this divine inspiration (*ru'ah ha-kodesh*) there is revealed to man's eyes the vision of divine unity that pervades all existence – especially the rarefied world of souls. These visions are described at length in the chapter "I Listened and I Heard." Its climax is the sparkling of the level of prophecy.

The next two chapters deal with the soul's analysis as it engages in Torah study. The chapter "To Know All the Mystery of Your Secret" includes the paragraphs in which the Rav describes his essential connection to the esoteric portion of the Torah and how the soul ascends to a mystical discipline that transcends ordinary study habits. The following chapter, "Great Is My Aspiration to Connect," details this mystical level, which brings [the Rav] to unite within him different worlds, and the soul's pain upon entering into classification and particulars. The conclusion of the chapter speaks of the realization that only by immersion in the particulars of Torah will [the Rav's] soul merit to delight in the Lord.

From here, we pass to the chapter, "To Serve the Lord," in which the Rav descends to the details – not only in terms of intellectual study, but also in terms of perfecting the will and the character traits. The chapter "To Return to Him" is on the one hand, a continuation of the previous chapter, while on the other hand, a summary of the entire process

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of connecting to the holy. Here the Rav describes how the soul returns to its exalted level even through the weaknesses and the failures of life. The chapter which concludes this process is, “The Joy of the Land of Israel,” in which are included the entries the Rav wrote in the Diaspora about his longing to return to the Land of Israel. Only in the Land can the soul fully connect to the holy.

The fourth and final part describes the connection of the Rav’s soul to all of humanity and [the soul’s] influence upon them. The chapter “Great Is My Love” speaks of his love for, and connection to, all the creations in general, and to the Children of Israel and Torah scholars in particular. The chapter “Listen to Me, My People!” pertains particularly to the Rav’s love for his people, bearers of holiness in the world. There is a deep analysis of the level of the soul of Israel which transcends all the classifications of sacred and secular; by the power of its great soul [the people] is redeemed. The last chapter, “The Birth Pangs of Redemption,” deals with the redemption of Israel from the perspective of the Rav’s mighty aspiration to bare within the process of the national renaissance, the renaissance of the holy, and his aspiration to the complete connection of the soul and the holy to the natural world and all life’s expanses.

Ran Sarid

“The King brought me to His [inner] chambers.”

Song of Songs 1:4

“Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, has chambers upon chambers
in His Torah, so each and every Torah sage has chambers upon
chambers in his Torah.”

Eliyahu Rabbah 7

“I need only to be attuned to the essential attention, to listen to the
secret conversation of the creation in its innermost chambers. I shall
hear and my soul will come alive.”

Rav Kook

מתוך חֲדָרֵי הַפְּנִימִיִּים

מתוכי, מתוך מעיני, הנני צריך תמיד לקחת את האוצרות הגנוזים. תמיד אני קשור באתו הצער הקדוש של דרישת השלמות העליונה, וזו אינה מתמלאת ואינה צריכה להתמלאות. כי זאת היא תכונת העריגה הנצחית, שיסודה הוא הצמאון האלהי, אשר כל דבר אחר שבעולם לא ירוה אותו, כִּי־אם המבקש לבדו, הצמאון לבדו, שיחישף תמיד יותר ויותר, ויפר תמיד יותר ויותר, הוא בעצמו הוא מתהפך למקור כל ענג, למכון כל העדנים הרוחניים, לזיו שדי.



אני צריך לדבר הרבה אודות עצמי. עניני עצמיותי מכרחים להתברר לי הרבה מאד. בהבנתי את עצמי אבין את הכל, את העולם ואת החיים, עד הגעת הבינה למקור החיים.



הנני מחפש תמיד מה שבתוך נשמתו. והעבודות החיצונה היא מסיעה את הדעה מהחפוש הפנימי, לבקש לשוא בקצה הארץ את אשר לא ימצא במעמקי נפשי.



From My Inner Chambers

From my midst, from my wellsprings, I need always to take the hidden treasures. I am forever bound to the holy pain of the quest for the higher wholeness, and this is not fulfilled, nor must it be fulfilled. For this is the condition of eternal longing, whose foundation is the thirst for the divine. No other thing in the world can quench it – only that which is sought, the thirst itself that is increasingly exposed, increasingly recognized. That itself turns into the source of all joy, the basis of all the spiritual delights, the splendor of *Shaddai*.



I must speak much about myself. The matters of my essence must be made very clear to me. By understanding myself, I shall understand all, the world and life, until the understanding reaches to the source of life.



I forever search that which is within my soul. The outer servitude distracts from the inner search, to seek in vain at the end of the earth that which is not to be found in the depths of the soul.



איך אמר דברים לאחרים, אם לא אמר דבר לנפשי? איך אשא דע על העולם הרוחני והחמרי, אם אלה האוצרות הכמוסים בקרבי לא אבקש להם מפתח? "שאו שערים ראשיכם" אמר אל חדרי נפשי, אל לבי ואל פליותי.



נפשי שואפת להיות חודרת בתוך חדריה הפנימיים. כל מה שהנני מתאמץ לדלות מאור התורה ומאור העולם, הנני מוצא שכל השרשים של המבקשים הטהורים, מכרחים הם להיות נמצאים במעמקי הנפש עצמה, שאורה הוא נטול מאור התורה וזיו העולם. אם אני שב מתוך התורה ומתוך העולם אל נפשי פנימה, או אוסיף חיים, להכניס אל חדרי התורה ואל חדרי גנוי העולם. וכל גלוי בהיר משלש הוא בערכו – נפשי, תורני ועולמי. "תען לשוני אמרתך, כי כל-מצותיך צדק".



איני צריך להונח את תביעתי הפנימית, לסקר על הכל מרוחי העצמי. ועם-זה יש שהנני קרוא להתחזק ולהרחיב את השקפותי הרוחניות והמעשיות, על-פי אותה הקליטה הבאה מבחוץ, על-ידי רעות, ערוב בין הבריות, קריאה בספרים, ויתר נסיונות החיים. ואחר-כך חוזר הכל להתמוג ברוחי העצמי והנני שב להסתכלותי הפנימית.



אני משעבד את עצמי ללמודים, למעשים, לחברתיות, לחובות שונים ומשנים, עד שאין שום רעיון נגמר ונגמל. ההארות העליונות נושרות כמו צצים נופלים אחרי הראותם, טרם בא תור הגמלם, על-ידי רוח סערה. כבר הגיעה השעה

1. Psalms 24:7.

From My Inner Chambers

How can I say things to others, if I don't say a thing to my soul? How can I opine on the spiritual and material world, if I do not seek a key to the treasures in my midst? "Gates, lift up your heads,"¹ I shall say to the chambers of my soul, to my heart, and to my kidneys.



My soul aspires to penetrate its inner chambers. I discover that whatever I strive to raise up from the light of the Torah and from the light of the world – the roots of the pure objectives must be found in the depths of the soul itself, whose light is derived from the light of the Torah and the splendor of the world. If I return inwardly from the midst of the Torah and from the midst of the world to my soul, then I will add life to enter into the chambers of the Torah and the hidden chambers of the world. And every clear revelation is threefold: of soul, of Torah, and of world.

"Let my tongue sing (*ta'an*) of Your word, for all your commandments are righteousness."²



I need not neglect my inner demand to survey all from my essential spirit. And yet, it sometimes happens that I am called to be fortified and to broaden my spiritual and practical perspectives based on that [which is] received from without, through friendship, mingling with people, reading books, and life's other experiences. And after, all returns to be integrated in my essential spirit, and I return to my inner look.



I subjugate myself to studies, to deeds, to socializing, to diverse duties – until no idea is ever completed. The supernal illuminations drop like buds that fall after their appearance before they reach maturity, [blown about] by a storm wind. The hour has already arrived to

2. Ibid., 119:172. Rav Kook hints to the Hebrew word "*ta'an*" being the initials of *Torah*, *'olam* (world), *nefesh* (soul).

לשבור את הכבלים שידי עצמי שמוות אותם על כל אברי נשמתו, על כל חלקי רוחו ונפשו. לא לי להביט על מעצורים חיצוניים. הישועה קבועה היא בלב פנימה. מעין האשר שופע ונוזל הוא באיך הרף. חסד ד' מלא עולם. הנני צריך רק לעמוד על ההקשבה העצמית, להאזין את סוד השיח של היצירה בחדרי חדריה, אשמע ותחי נפשי.



היתכן שלא אמצא את אשר אני מבקש, בעת אשר בקשתי היא נובעת ממעמקי האמת! ומה אנכי מבקש אם לא את עצמי, את עצמיותי האמתית, לא את לבושי החמריים או הרוחניים. כל אלה קנינים הם, יבואו וישמשו את העצם. אבל אם העצם, עצמיותי, ממני והלאה, מה יועילו כל המכשירים? וזאת היא נקדת הכבד של המשאל הפנימי, הטעון גבורה אמתית כדי לעמוד עליו בחזקה. וההשתדלות התדירית למצא את עצמיותי, היא גם-כן השורש ביחש למציאותה של האמה כלה ושל האנושיות במובנה הרחב, ושל ההווה כלה, בתוכיותה והרחבתה. וזהו השער לד', למצא את המבקש הנצחי, הלא הוא אל עולם, מקור כל המבקשים כלם, אשר אליו כל נפש תאווה, ומבלעדו אין מה לבקש. והנה זאת היא התכונה הייחודית והתמימה, המטרדת את הרוח והמעפפת את כל הנשיות הנפשיות הפנימיות, שלא יוכלו למצא מסלתן, כל-זמן שאין הפעמד היסודי של המבקש העצמי מבסס על היסוד הנפשי של כל תנועות החיים כלן. ולשם כך בוא יבוא כל המון התלמוד, כל העסקנות המשפלת, וכל ההתעוררות הנפשית ברבבות תנועותיה, בחיים, באדם ובעולם. "אשרי כל-חוכי לו".



3. In the Hebrew, there occur the three levels of Kabbalistic psychology (in descending order): *neshamah*, *ru'ah*, and *nefesh*.

From My Inner Chambers

break the chains that my own hands have imposed upon every limb of my soul, upon every part of my spirit.³ I must not pay heed to the outer obstacles. Salvation is fixed inwardly in the heart. The fount of happiness flows uninterruptedly. The world is full of the Lord's lovingkindness. I need only to be attuned to the essential attention, to listen to the secret conversation of the creation in its innermost chambers. I shall hear and my soul will come alive.



Is it possible that I shall not find that which I seek, when my quest flows from the depths of truth?! And what do I seek if not myself, my true essence – not my material or spiritual garments. All these are acquisitions; let them come and serve the essence. But if the essence, my essence, is beyond me, of what avail are all the gadgets? And this is the point of gravity of the inner desire, which requires true courage in order to demand it. This constant striving to find my essence is also the root in relation to the existence of the entire nation and of broad humanity, and of all existence, in its inwardness and expansiveness. And this is the gate to the Lord: to find the eternal objective, which is to say, the Eternal God, the source of all objectives, Whom every soul desires, and outside of Whom there is nothing to seek.

And behold, this is the purest, simplest characteristic that occupies the spirit and prevents the inner inclinations of the soul from finding their path, as long as the essential objective is not based on the soulful foundation of all life's movements. And towards this end comes all the study, all the educated activism, and all the myriad movements of the soul in life, in humanity, and in the world.

“Happy are all those who await Him.”⁴



4. Isaiah 30:18.

אין האדם קונה שום מעלה, כי-אם מתוכיותו, מעצמותו המהותית הפנימית, ולא ממה שפא לו מבחוץ, כי המקרים אינם מולידים את האשר האמת. אבל הלא התורה והמצוות הן עצמיות האשר, והם באים לאדם מחוץ לו? אמנם כאשר נתבונן נמצא, שכל אחד משיג מהתורה והמצוות, רק מה שצפון בפנימיותו. ולא עוד אלא שבכללות הדבר, האדם מקיף את כל ההויה, והרי התורה והמצוות, שהן הן עצמיותן של חקי ההויה, כלולות הן בו, וכשהוא מתדבק בהן, הרי הוא מתדבק בעצמיותו. וכשפא האדם על-ידם להדבקות האלהית, הרי הוא בודאי מוצא את עצמותו, כי כל עצמיותנו היא רק במקור הויתנו – באלהים, מקור כל הייש, שהננו נמצאים באמת בהמהותיות האמתית רק בו, ומחוץ לו הננו רק קלוטי המקריות. "נפשי אניתך בלילה אפרוחי בקרבי אשחרך".

From My Inner Chambers

One does not acquire any excellence other than from one's midst, from one's inner essence – not from the external, for accidents do not produce true happiness. But the Torah and the commandments are the essence of happiness, and do they not come to one from outside? However, when we examine, we find that one apprehends of the Torah and the commandments only that which is hidden in one's interior. Furthermore, in general, man encompasses all of existence, and the Torah and the commandments – which are the very essence of the laws of existence – are included in man; so by cleaving to [the Torah and the commandments], he is actually cleaving to himself. And when through them, one comes to cleave to God, then one certainly finds one's essence, for our entire essence is only in the source of our being – in God, the source of all that is. In truth, we are found essentially only in Him; outside of Him, we are but absorptions of accidents.

“My soul, I desired You by night; even my spirit in my midst, I sought You.”⁵

5. Ibid., 26:9.